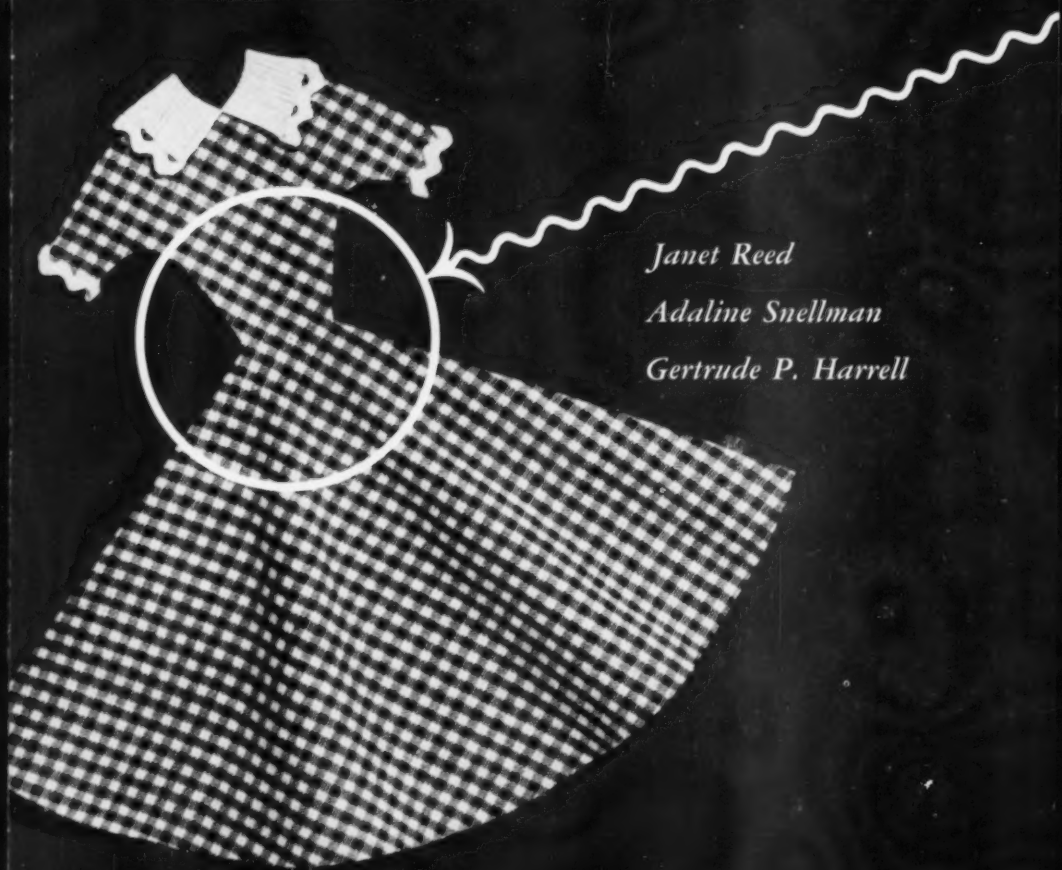


Cornell Extension Bulletin 960

# how to join the BLOUSE & SKIRT



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SIMPLIFIED SEWING SERIES : 2

## Simplified Sewing

Simplified sewing methods can give you professional results in a minimum of time. Not all methods work on every garment. The fabric, the style of the dress, and your own experience and skill in sewing will determine the method to choose. Use the easiest method which will achieve the results you want.

Much of the success of your garment is determined before one stitch has been made. Success involves knowing what you want to do, and how to do it.

In assembling a garment, the less the fabric is handled, the smoother will be its final appearance. This means you must be sure of an accurate fit if you are to eliminate handling the fabric through basting and fitting. The garment will need a minimum of fitting if you have chosen the correct pattern and made the necessary pattern adjustments. Pressing as you sew is always important.

The simplified sewing series has been planned to show you how to assemble a tailored cotton dress, but the techniques can also be applied to many other materials and styles. This bulletin describes two methods of joining the skirt to the blouse.

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# how to join the BLOUSE & SKIRT

SIMPLIFIED SEWING SERIES

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Your dress is nearing completion when you are ready to join the blouse and skirt.

A good fit at the waistline is essential for a trim appearance. The waistline should fit snugly enough so that the weight of the skirt hangs from the waist rather than the shoulders, but it should have enough ease to allow you to move freely. If the waistline is about one inch larger than your actual waist measurement, it should fit properly.

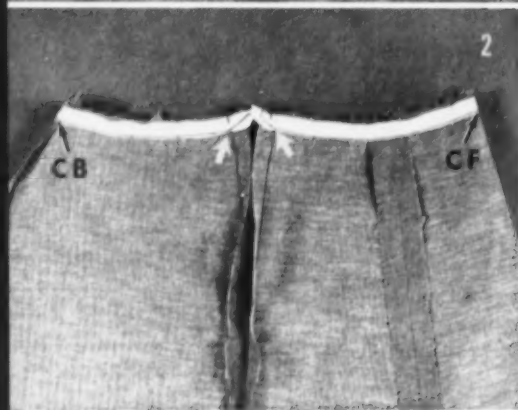
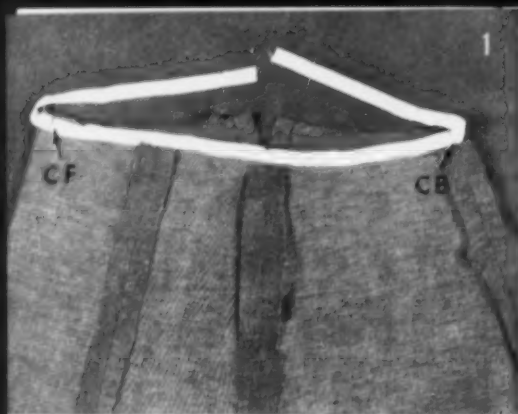
A tape at the waistline seam helps give a good fit and keeps the seam from stretching. It is especially desirable when the fabric stretches easily or when the skirt is heavy or extra-full. On cotton dresses, use a straight cotton tape or a strip of selvage cut from the fabric. For lightweight cottons and other fabrics, use pre-shrunk rayon seam tape.

There are several methods of joining the skirt and blouse. The two methods described in this bulletin give good results and are easy to do. The style of the dress may make a difference in the method you use. For example, if the dress has pockets in the side seam, Method I will be a better choice.

## METHOD 1: CONTINUOUS WAIST SEAM

In this method the side seams of the blouse and side seams of the skirt are sewed before the blouse and skirt are joined. The tape is used as a fitting guide and is attached to the skirt to adjust skirt and blouse fullness or ease to the waist measurement.

Measure your waist and add one inch for ease. Measure off this amount on the tape, and then mark off 2 or 3 extra inches of tape so you will have plenty with which to work.



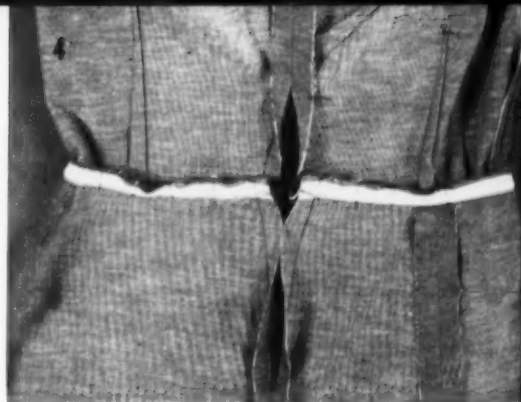
Machine-baste tape to skirt at lower edge of tape (figure 2). At the left side of the garment, where the placket opening will be, do not stitch straight across at the seam line, but angle the stitching off to cut edge so that not all seam allowance is used (figure 2). This gives extra length in the seam for the curve of the waistline, and helps make the placket lie smooth and flat within this curve.

Stitch across the waistline of blouse just below the seam line to keep center fronts together and hold darts and facings in place. See figure 5 in Method 2.

Turn skirt *wrong* side out, and blouse *right* side out. Place blouse all the way down inside skirt with right sides together, keeping waistline edges together. Match at center back and front, side seams, and darts (figure 3).



Adjust ease of blouse to fit skirt, and pin and stitch on seam line, just escaping the tape (figure 4). Stitch on blouse side to enable you to adjust blouse ease to skirt. Again angle the stitching at the side placket back and front. If you wish to check the fit, machine baste before the final stitching.



Press seam up into blouse or down into skirt. The seam of the fuller side of the garment remains flat. If seam is to be pressed down, the skirt will need to be clipped on the curved seam at right angles to the stitching in order to lie flat.

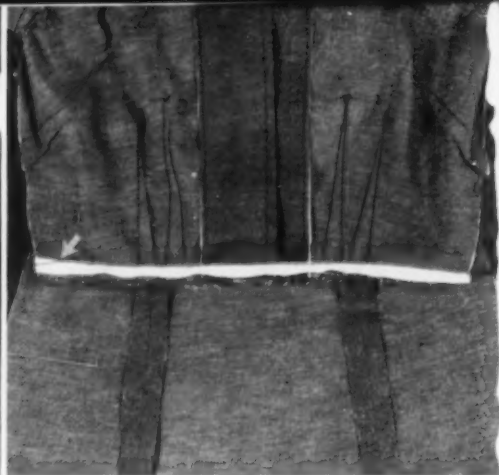
## METHOD 2: FACTORY METHOD

In this method, the front skirt and blouse are stitched together, and the back skirt and blouse are stitched together before the side seams are sewed. The side seams of the blouse are sewed down a few inches at underarm to permit setting in sleeve before joining blouse and skirt. This method is quick and easy to do. Tape is used to keep fabric from stretching, rather than as a means of fitting the waistline. The design of some dresses will make this an unsatisfactory method to use, however.

Stitch across the waistline just below seam line to keep center fronts together and to hold darts and facing in place (figure 5). This stitching may also be done on the back blouse if there are darts or other construction details you want to hold in place.

In the dress illustrated, the left side seam of blouse was stitched down to top of placket opening. The right side was stitched down about two inches. This was necessary to set in sleeves (figure 6).





Pin front skirt and front blouse together, and back skirt and back blouse together (figure 7). Place pins at right angles to raw edge on fuller side of garment with heads of pins toward the raw edge. This enables you to remove pins easily as you stitch. The dress can be tried on at this stage to test length of blouse. The weight of the skirt helps blouse fall into correct position. Stitch on waistline seam, stitching in edge of tape as seam is sewed (figure 8). It may be easier for you to stitch waistline seam first and attach tape with a second row of stitching just below the first stitching.

Attach tape to fuller side of garment. If blouse has more fullness than the skirt, stitch tape on blouse side. If the skirt has more fullness, stitch on the skirt side. Always stitch the garment with the fuller side up next to the presser foot, to enable you to adjust the fullness as you sew.

At the waistline on the left side of garment, back and front, where the placket opening will be, do not stitch straight across at waistline seam, but angle the stitching off so that not all the seam allowance is used (figure 8). This gives extra length in the seam for the curve of the waistline and helps the placket lie smooth and flat within this curve.

Press. If tape is on blouse side, press seam down. If tape has been sewed to skirt, press seam up. The fuller side of garment remains flat. Clip edges of skirt if necessary to make it lie smooth.

Sew side seams. Leave left side open for placket. The placket should be long enough for you to get in and out of the dress easily. If you are in doubt about the fit of the dress, machine-baste side seams before permanent stitching.

### **Zipper placket at side seam of dress**

The dress is now ready to have the zipper inserted in the side placket. To make the placket, follow the directions that come with the zipper.

The zipper selected should be the proper length for the opening, and a suitable weight for the fabric.

The use of a zipper or cording foot on the sewing machine will enable you to stitch closer to the zipper.

The completed placket should be:

1. Smooth and flat with no puckers.
2. Waistline seam of both back and front should meet at the side seam.
3. Top stitching should be an even distance from the edge, usually not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.
4. Zipper should be completely covered by the fabric.

With blouse and skirt joined and placket completed, your dress is ready for the hem.



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